

IS BICYCLING IMMORAL?—The Horner's Nest Miss Charlotte Smith Has Stirred Up.

BICYCLING IS NOT "IMMORAL."

To W. R. Hearst, New York Journal:

Shame upon you, Miss Charlotte Smith, President of the Woman's Rescue League. Shame upon you, narrow-minded theorist, who, over your own signature you confess yourself to be. Shame upon you, for the public demonstration you have given of the truth of your statement that "Woman is woman's worst enemy," by your unrighteous condemnation, of wheel and rider through the columns of the public press.

All praise, credit and honor, to you for opening a refuge for peddlars, women of Boston and befriending the "unhappily married by God and man." But all the more shame it is that you should permit what you term your "first practical opportunity to consider their ways from the inside," and the fact that "many of them told me that they had been taking lessons on the bicycle," to lead you to assume judicial functions amid such respectable surroundings, and after "obtaining reliable data" from such vicious sources, to sit in judgment upon your peers, and cast such wholesale reflections upon woman's womanliness and purity, and man's manliness and honor.

I say wholesale, because I can say to-day, and say it without exaggeration—the people are avaricious, and while there are dangers and excesses on wheels, as in all things else, the cry of the people from early youth to old age itself, is one universal song of thankfulness for, and blessings on—the bicycle.

The bicycle is not immoral. I know the bicycle is not immoral, because I do ride a wheel, and "have made a careful study of the matter" upon my wheel, and have thus had "the means of obtaining reliable data" which are not at the command of the theorists, who do not ride, and hence know nothing except by hearsay of the "Bicycle Girl," "the bicycle flirt," "the bicycle code of etiquette," and nothing of the respect-commanding bearing of the ladies, and the gallantry and honor of the knights of the wheel upon the road.

"Facilis decessus avari." Indeed! But not upon a wheel, for the bicycle is proving itself to be one of the greatest aids to morality that has ever been discovered, and the leaders of the W. R. T. U. enthusiastically pronounce it their greatest and strongest ally in the work of temperance and reformation.

"Good women often become bad through the influence of their own sex," is truth, and woman's weakness has in truth been woman's woe. Her being need has been a more healthful body and more healthful mind, her muscles and stronger nerves. The bicycle came and brought all, and with them self-respect, self-reliance, and self-control, and not "a theory," but an absolute fact, that "a woman owns herself upon a bicycle, and requires no chaperon, no protector."

Learn to ride a wheel, Miss Charlotte Smith, and then come to this wicked city of New York, and we will prove to you by actual evidence that you can ride alone from Harlem to the Battery at any hour of day or night as safe from insult, molestation or demoralizing influences, as you can walk the streets of Boston at noonday to attend a meeting of "Woman's Rescue League."

Learn to ride and get your "first practical opportunity for considering from the inside" the good of the ways of the wheelmen and wheelwomen, and then (while you will find some things to criticize, and some to correct, as you will find in all human conduct and affairs), you can but see that the virtuous and promoters of the light, life-steed of steel have created a greater "Woman's Rescue League" than ever woman conceived or man dreamed of, hoped for, or thought possible.

Never before did there exist so strong a bond of mutual respect, confidence and good-fellowship between the men and women of our own and other lands as to-day exists among the men and women who ride the bicycle.

The wheelwoman is everywhere, herself and her presence so respected, that drunkenness, coarseness, roughness and profanity are practically unknown, and so strong is the bond of brotherhood, that every wheelman is a self-constituted protector of every woman upon a wheel, and bold indeed would be he who would dare show her neglect or otherwise offer offence.

IDA TRAFFORD BELL, New York Consul, L. A. W.

FROM THE ARTICLE BY MISS CHARLOTTE SMITH, PRESIDENT OF THE WOMAN'S RESCUE LEAGUE, WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY JOURNAL, JULY 19.

"Bicycling is immoral!" "I have said so!" "How do I know that bicycling is immoral, inasmuch as I do not ride a wheel?" "I know, because I have made a careful study of the matter," and "I have means of obtaining reliable data on the subject which are not at the command of the theorist." "My mission takes me among wicked women of all grades." "I know all about them; they have taken up the bicycle not only as a means of enjoyment, but for utilitarian purposes." "And perhaps you know there are evil-minded men abroad who go about seeking what they may devour. They, too, seek the aid of the bicycle as a means to their infamous ends."

BACKS UP ALL MISS SMITH SAYS.

To W. R. Hearst, New York Journal:

The very decided attitude taken by Charlotte Smith, the president of the Woman's Reform League, with reference to bicycling, has met with the approbation of a great many mothers and fathers who do not rashly rush into print. I wish to corroborate her statement that bicycling fosters immorality, and to add my testimony to hers, that it increases the perils of young women, leads to immorality, recklessness of conduct, bad company and a whole train of evils inconsistent with the life of a thorough lady.

Of course, I do not insist that these are always the immediate consequences of bicycling, but they are the consequences of bicycling to a sufficiently large extent to make it an open question whether the gain of our women in muscular strength is not fairly offset by the loss in modesty and feminine propriety.

Bicycling is the latest popular excuse for giddiness and vanity to exploit itself. It has led to an exhibition on Broadway and the boulevards that would not have been countenanced a quarter of a century ago.

It is an indisputable fact that if some of these women were to make the same exhibition on the sidewalk as pedestrians they would be arrested. But to mount a wheel is to obtain a general license. The complaint is now beginning to be heard in respectable families that the daughters are different girls since they took to bicycling.

To go out afoot and make new acquaintances haphazard on the street would be accounted a dreadful breach of propriety. To go out and make them on a wheel is quite another matter. For a girl to exhibit her leg to the knee in promenade would be immodest. To exhibit it on a wheel is regular. To see, as I saw only yesterday, several frail creatures decked out in fantastic costumes, dashing through the trucks and cabs and across the tracks of the cable cars on Broadway with a defiant air that seemed to say, "there is nothing too dangerous or too flagrant for us to attempt if we can only have spectators," was, I must confess, rather a sorry sight if any of the old feminine virtues are of any account.

There is some evidence to show that excessive use of the bicycle brings on ailments peculiar to women. My own experience leads me to believe that the unnatural use of the muscles results very often in uterine displacement and prolapsus. As to Charlotte Smith's claim that wheeling produces appendicitis, the data are insufficient to warrant a conclusion. But it is very certain that appendicitis has increased thirty per cent since the wheel came into general use. That may be a mere coincidence. My own observations lead to other conclusions, as follows: The use of the wheel brings a new strain on the circulatory system. A girl can walk a mile and not increase the action of the heart above a normal point; she cannot drive a wheel half the distance without an abnormal respiration.

The statement has been made—I presume by bicycle manufacturers—that wheeling strengthens the whole abdominal system of muscles. Well, the same thing might be said of the flying trapeze, and has been said of the heavy sewing machine, but the only reply that can be made is that there are better methods of exercise that have no risks. It is no uncommon thing now to find young women with varicose veins which are the result of bicycling, and within a month two cases have been reported of rupture of the spleen, attributable to the same cause.

It is not, of course, possible in writing for readers to touch upon another and more formidable group of complaints, which, although less pronounced, are far more serious in their effects upon the community. At some time I feel sure that the medical profession will muster courage enough to tell some of the new secrets of bicycling which have come to them professionally.

NOTHING BAD ABOUT THE BICYCLE.

To W. R. Hearst, New York Journal:

There is not the remotest justification for assuming that bicycle riding is immoral. To assert that it is, casts infamy upon the name and intentions of thousands of good women.

I do not ride, consequently have no prejudice. But I resent with vigor the errors of Charlotte Smith, of Washington, who betrays sublime ignorance of the characteristics of vicious women, considering she claims to have been occupied in their redemption.

Charlotte Smith's article in the New York Sunday Journal of the 19th instant savors very strongly of that self-consciousness the abolitionists exhibited thirty-six years ago and the suffragists have exhibited for God knows how long; timber soundings of lividhood for the indigent, the lazy, and the innocent, rational recreation contributes to impurity of mind and dishonor of life are idiotic absurdities.

But Charlotte Smith will say she does not mean that the bicycle itself is conducive to immorality, but that it throws innocent women in contact with vicious ones. If she knows all she claims to know about evil women, she knows they avoid, as they do the devil, every woman they know or believe to be pure and honest. The rank and file of bad women go out of their way to avoid meeting women of character and repute.

Charlotte Smith says "the bad girl induces the good girl to participate in her amusements." Never! And the reasons why that cannot be true are two-fold: First, the bad woman has too much to do in her own behalf; secondly, a good woman is impregnable to the allurements of ignorance, vulgarity and insolence, which are the attributes of the other. If a good girl becomes a bad girl it is through a bad man, not through a bad woman; but, in the logic of human nature, however her downfall be accomplished, it cannot be more the work of the bicycle than of the piano, the street car, the railroad train or the promenade.

Charlotte Smith's reasoning about the way bad women are developed is orthodox and so old I can't remember this minute just when and where it was exploded; but I think it was abandoned away back in the forties, a period she can, perhaps, remember. It has, however, neither sense nor truth in it, and no more relevancy to the recreations of the bicycle than hog's-head cheese has to international law.

When the bad man and the bad girl go out on their wheels, as Charlotte Smith declares they do (and as I've no doubt they may if they've nothing else more interesting to occupy them) they don't "get acquainted incidentally" with good women. There is no getting acquainted incidentally in a fast life. Meadow robins and vultures never affiliate. They consort with their own kind.

The "dirty" girl, who seems to excite Charlotte Smith's sympathy, and of whom she is disinclined to believe any badness, is the worst hen in the coop, on the wheel or off. But her schemes are to catch men, not women.

She hates and avoids rivals. And yet, with her avowed pity for the unfortunate of the street, and her half-hearted apologies for the giddy flirt, Charlotte Smith strives to maintain that riding a bicycle will make a besotted, bedraggled creature of a woman with a good heart and a pure soul, if she rides long enough! I honestly believe that is rabid insanity.

Charlotte Smith admits that her sources of information are bad women, who are notoriously the most infamous liars on earth. Still she prefers their testimony to the example of cultivated Christian ladies.

Allow me to offer Charlotte Smith a few suggestions:

Of course, I don't know what sort of company everybody keeps, nor what sort of liars they have an inherent preference for, but so long as deductions are made from the twaddle of penitent or distressed women, no other woman has the right to wipe her fingers on the characters of the honest members of her sex, even if they do ride bicycles. Whoever pins faith in human nature to the maudlin accusations of irresponsible, abandoned women must be expected to despise wholesome amusements. There is honor enough in womanhood to preserve the bicycle, a promoter of healthful recreation; and Charlotte Smith must find a wiser Socrates for her supply of wisdom than the malicious tongues of the evicts of evil places.

Charlotte Smith's article is fallacious in its logic, ridiculous in its argument, preposterous in its premises. WILLIAM ALBERT LEWIS. Baltimore, Md., July 21, 1896.

THE CRANKY LOGIC OF CHARLOTTE SMITH.

To W. R. Hearst, New York Journal:

The trouble with Charlotte Smith, like a lot of other enthusiastic but misguided souls, is that she has glued her mind to one idea, and, like a fly on sticking paper, nothing can pull her away from it. The reasoning of all such monomaniacs is as ridiculous and biased as it is illogical.

She set out to do a noble work—to rescue fallen women—and to her is all honor for it. To further her own philanthropic end and to get at the heart of her cause, she has lived with them. She has talked with bad women, eaten with bad women, lodged with bad women, and given up her whole being to bad women. Living with them so much, she sees nothing in the universe but bad women. Every female in a short time to her warped vision is bad, in esse or posse. Ergo, you, I and it are bad. Everything is bad. The bicycle is bad.

She means well, but, like so many so-called reformers, she is one-tenth right to nine-tenths wrong. To her, reasoning on a given subject like immorality becomes like the situation of the Calvinists—you're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't—unless Miss Charlotte Smith rescues you.

If Sister Smith had said: "Bloomers are immoral," I would have said: "Well, they're disgusting." If she had said, "Bicycling is being done to excess," I would have said, "You're quite right there." When she says "Bicycling is injurious to woman's health," I say, "Undoubtedly, in many cases." But when she says "Bicycling is immoral," I can only answer—using her own line of reasoning—then so is promenade, riding, driving, boating, fishing, picnicking, playing golf, croquet or tennis, or strolling home from prayer meeting or evening church.

Bad men, bad women are there and everywhere, and so is the Devil. But men, bad women are there and everywhere, and so is the Devil.

The Salvation Army ride wheels, and their mission is to save the bad. The Princesses of Wales ride wheels, and they were never called bad. Miss Frances Willard rides the wheel, and her worst enemy would never call her bad—or even "dirty" or "sporty." The Queen of Italy rides a bicycle, and they call her "The Pearl of Savoy."

Miss Smith's tirade has neither sense nor rhyme nor reason in it. And there's reason in everything—except apparently in Miss Smith when she's on the social rampage.

There doubtless is badness on the bicycle, but the bicycle is no more bad than the cotton, the choir, the card party, the croquet club or the church social, or any other form of rational amusement. It certainly is not so because Miss Smith says she knows some one who told her so.

A. B. WHEELER.

A NEW KIND OF LEVEE.

It is Very Strong and Will Save the Southern Vast Sums.

A new method has been found for constructing levees, those river walls upon which the existence of the country along the lower Mississippi depends. Lieutenant Roche, of the United States

In this way. The mammoth steam dredger Ram is employed in the work.

The old method of building levees was by manual labor, and the material used was dry dirt. It is estimated that dredging will be much cheaper and save the people of the Mississippi Valley hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

The mud levee, moreover, is much stronger than the one made of dirt. It is to firm that the crayfish, which do immense dam-

The Great Tidal Wave---Continued.

breath of a gun bursts, and the next volley instead of being thrown into the upper air was projected horizontally across the valley to the north of the volcano. While the whole country was darkened by the great mass of ash, with which the air was filled, the hot ashes drove back to the sea, and the people were fleeing to the open ground to escape from falling trees.

In order to understand the calamity of last month, one should imagine the extent, once beneath the sea, at a distance of only a few miles from the eastern coast, and running parallel with that coast, a range of volcanic peaks. From each one of those on the morning of the disaster a stream of steam and mud and ashes must have been forced up through the water, and the wear



THE REPORTER OF THE DAILY KOKUMIN ON THE SCENE.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MOZAWAYA & MIZUNO, TOKIO.

and houses. And then the avalanche of earth and rock, which had formed the northern side of the mountain, swept down and buried the whole Nagase valley, with its villages and people, laying waste an area of more than thirty square miles. Only about 600 lives had been lost and a great mountain had been blown to pieces, extensive forests had been razed by the shock and rivers had been blocked and diverted from their course.



THE RUINS---FROM THE TO DAILY "KOKUMIN."



IN THE VILLAGE OF TOTAN AFTER THE FLOOD.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY M. MOZAWAYA & MIZUNO, TOKIO

To so remote a cause as the trend of the ocean current, must, therefore, be attributed the gravity of the catastrophe, for had the submarine eruption been upward, only half of its force would have been expended in the form of one huge billow rolling harmlessly across the broad surface of the Pacific.

Upon the folds of the mountain range, where the mud did not rise high enough to cover the debris of the wreck of the buildings, an extraordinary circumstance added to the loss of life, as well as to the anguish of the helpless observers. When the sea had resumed its level, hundreds of people in each village lay planed under broken timbers and tangled in the wreckage of the houses. Thousands, who had been drowned or killed by the shock, recovered consciousness and cried for help. From the still higher line of dwellings on the mountain side the few who had been fortunate to be out of reach of the wave came down as soon as they recovered their presence of mind to help the wounded. But every eye and saw had been swept away by the flood. Far up on the slope, where the spray thrown from the great wave had not been heavy enough to do more serious damage,

it had deposited pools of water in all the little sheds and outhouses, creating so great a confusion that nothing was left in its place. However, distracted by the appalling nature of the calamity, the rescuers ran to and fro, asking their friends imprisoned in the debris to tell them where the needed implements could be found.

In the village of Usamul a man and his wife and his three married sons and their wives were kneeling, all eight of them, in a line under the eaves of the temple. Suddenly the ground beneath the foundation of the temple subsided and the heavy rafters which supported the roof fell upon their heads, as they knelt, crushing their feet and fastening them side by side to the earth. The water passed over their bodies and receded, leaving the piece of timber unmoved and all eight people still living. All through the night they cried for help, and in the morning as the saturated ground settled more and more, the huge rafters rolled over, forcing them upon their faces, and lay across their backs. And while the rescuers were still trying to find appliances with which to raise the heavy mass of herak wood, one after another of the unhappy family yielded to the intolerable pressure until they lay dead, prone upon the earth at the feet of the gods.

At Katsu a woman whose only son had been killed by the first wave rushed into the temple of Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, she of the forty arms outstretched to give, she who listens to the prayers of the unhappy. Standing erect before the great bronze, the woman blasphemed aloud, crying, "O liar and cheat! O breaker of promises! O unworthy wearer of the lotus flower!" and upon this, the idol fell upon the woman and points of the outstretched fingers of the forty hands pierced her flesh; and where the base of the bronze goddess had stood there was a pool of water.

Of horses there perished so many thousands that the farmers on the lower slope of the hills have not yet been able to drag away and sort out the remains of their farm buildings. They still stand crying aloud upon the cruelty of the gods, while the soldiers and the officers sent by the Government try to show them, by the ex-

ample of their own labors, that the dismembered roofs can be raised again, if the owners will but take heart to resume their labors. But they have lost their parents and their brothers and their children. They have seen their ripening crops swept by the waters and buried beneath the mud. Their familiar tools are lost and they stare helplessly at the new implements provided for them by the bounty of the Government.

It will be at least ten years before this part of Japan begins to smile again. An interval of less than ten years elapsed between the disaster of Bantai-San and this present calamity. Will another terrible trouble come upon the people before they have restored their farms to the condition of prosperity? Is it the will of Heaven that this part of Japan should be abandoned by man and beast in uselessness until it is wrecked and torn by another volcanic disturbance?

There is no want of initiative and courage on the part of the authorities. All that money can do is being done. But three or four years will have passed before it is possible to say how far the damage may be repaired.



AFTER THE DISASTER---FROM THE DAILY "KOKUMIN."

IN THE RED CROSS HOSPITAL.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MOZAWAYA & MIZUNO, TOKIO.



THE RUINS AT KAMAISHI.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MOZAWAYA & MIZUNO, TOKIO.



Army Engineer Corps, who is in charge of the levee district below New Orleans, is experimenting with the method, which, so far has proved successful.

The plan is to build the wall with mud thrown up from the bottom of the river by a dredge. All the levees in Lieutenant Roche's district are now being constructed

age to Mississippi plantations, CHEST PEN TRATE IT.

Until recently Lieutenant Roche found difficulty in holding the mixture of water and river mud thrown up on the shore by the dredge. This has finally been overcome by means of plankton, which keeps the mixture within a limited territory. The plankton leaked at first, but the use of willows stopped the leaks, and the experiment is now a success.